

April 28, 2006

## Readers to EV mayors: Butt out!

### Dear Editor:

Mayors Hawker, Berman and Dunn of Mesa, Gilbert and Chandler, respectively, offer their advice to Ahwatukee and Southwest communities on the long contentious South Mountain Loop 202 freeway link.

None of these men is renowned for exhibiting esteemed leadership in their own communities. Mesa leads with red ink hemorrhaging since 2000 with draconian service cuts; Gilbert can't come to a reasonable compromise on a fire protection plan for county islands within its municipal boundaries, a prima facie health and safety requirement for government; Chandler can't manage reasonable esprit de corps within its council, mayor, city manager form of government, instead acting like neighborhood brats in a turf game.

Since you guys can't manage your own "houses" with purpose and accomplishment, "butt out" of our area problem with the freeway. If we need your advice, we'll ask for it.

Conversely to ill-advised mayoral counsel, John Talton's editorial in the *Arizona Republic* (April 16 edition) is prescient, researched and provides foresight to be weighed seriously, discussed and used as a future mass transportation basis for planning henceforth.

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and its enabler, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), have not developed verifiable cost data for the South Mountain Loop 202 link. The figures published, \$1 billion to \$2.4 billion, are not data verifiable. If \$2.4 billion were accurate if contracted and built today, cost per mile would be \$92,309,687 million per mile at an estimated 26-mile length (no terminus yet known at western end). MAG estimates per public statement to the *Arizona Republic* (April 20 edition) a 25-minute time saving for a 26-mile trip vs. present 50-mile trip; this equates to \$3,692,238.40 per minute time saving. Nobody's time is worthy of such irresponsible transportation investment or any other public investment.

ADOT and MAG have been blindfolded for 23 years since drawing dotted proposed route lines on a map and played "Pin the Tail on the Donkey." With South Mountain Loop 202 they have not hit the target. Ahwatukee has 98 percent built-out since 1983, and southwest communities affected are growing daily, faster than toadstools after spring rains.

All Arizona transportation tax dollars will be squandered by ADOT and MAG pressing forward with this route, it's a viable window long since lost. They're the donkeys seeking support from sources unaffected strategically.

This road is a truck bypass since conception in 1982. ADOT, MAG and HDR, ADOT's high-priced embedded consultant, have acted with gross incompetence and ineptness in the timed planning and execution of the freeway. Kill it now.

As Talton wrote, "It's not that freeways are always inappropriate. It's just that they can't solve our total needs for the future. And they can't do this when transportation is totally divorced from what actually happens in development" (i.e. neighborhoods and communities). He concludes, "But the real insanity is the status quo: doing the same thing, hoping for a different result" (i.e., meaningful relief from traffic congestion and travel stress).

Greta C. Rogers